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SUBJECT: PORTUGAL DISAPPOINTED WITH COPENHAGEN, SAYS EU
WILL ASSOCIATE

REF: STATE 3079

Classified By: Gary B. Applegarth, Pol-Econ Officer, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Poleconoff discussed reftel points on January 21 with Fausto Brito e Abreu, advisor on climate change in the Portuguese Ministry of Environment, who said the EU will be submitting this month a combined letter of association for all member states to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat and inscribing a European Union-wide carbon emissions reduction goal of at least 20 percent, and possibly 20-30 percent pending comparable commitments by other nations. Brito e Abreu said Portugal is "not enthusiastic" about the Accord and does not plan any diplomatic outreach to convince other nations to associate with it, but rather is looking forward to "something more substantial" coming out of the Mexico Climate Conference scheduled for December 2010.

¶2. (C) Brito e Abreu, a member of the Portuguese delegation at the Copenhagen climate change talks in December, described the Copenhagen Accord as "disappointing" but praised President Obama's role in the negotiations and credited the inclusion of language regarding mitigation action reporting and verification (paragraph 5 of the Accord) to President Obama's actions. Brito e Abreu said the 2 degree celsius warming limitation target was "nothing new," as it was agreed to at the G-8 summit in July 2009, and was critical of the Accord's "bottom up" approach for identifying mitigation actions, saying "the EU prefers for science to dictate the goal, and then assign required actions to meet that goal."

¶3. (C) Brito e Abreu said the EU performed poorly at Copenhagen due to the Danish chair's lack of understanding of parliamentary procedures and the EU representatives' failure to effectively use media coverage to convey the EU message. Taking advantage of the Danes' failure to manage the general sessions, developing countries "blocked everything" and were bent on preserving the Kyoto Protocol, which obligates only developed nations to act. Brito e Abreu described China as obstructionist in Copenhagen, using their role as "champion of the developing countries" as a means to avoid making meaningful emissions reduction commitments.

¶4. (C) Finally, Brito e Abreu frankly described the logistics and management of the Copenhagen meetings as a "mess," with visiting Ministers and delegates waiting in long lines for accreditation, fragmented and undermanned security, and a general lack of organization.

¶5. (C) Comment: Despite acknowledging progress in some areas, Brito e Abreu's bottom line was EU disappointment in the Accord. He primarily blamed developing nations for the failure to produce a stronger outcome at Copenhagen, but it

was clear that he believes the U.S. and other developed nations should be willing to commit to binding actions whether developed nations do so or not. Strengthening Portuguese support for the Accord will probably depend on whether a large number of nations associate with it and inscribe mitigation actions. End Comment.

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